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BY EDGAR ULSAMER, SENIOR EDITOR

Washington, D. C., Dec. 6 Space Treaty Rift?

There is evidence of considerable polarization within the Administration concerning national policy on space weapons and electronic warfare related to military spacecraft. The point at issue is a treaty that is being negotiated between the US and the Soviet Union barring the deployment of antisatellite interceptors, or ASATs. Several sticky, gravely consequential points are involved, beginning with the fact that the Soviet Union has fully operational ASATs that clearly are capable of blowing up—by nonnuclear means—spacecraft at low to medium altitudes.

The US has no such systems in being although there can be no doubt that launchers with nuclear warheads are readily available to destroy Soviet spacecraft, if, in case of war, the National Command Authorities should decide to disown the 1967 Outer Space Treaty that prohibits placing in orbit objects that carry nuclear weapons.

This prohibition probably becomes academic in case of nuclear war between the superpowers. But there are operational drawbacks to using nuclear weapons—especially those meant to protect US military spacecraft from attacking interceptors—since nuclear effects in space propagate over great distances and don't differentiate between friend and foe. Even relatively low-yield warheads would disable most if not all unhardened spacecraft within a radius of several hundred miles. Thus, the destruction of a Soviet ASAT at the cost of dooming the US spacecraft that is to be protected—at least until US spacecraft can be fully hardened—would be a Pyrrhic victory.

A strong case is being made by the Defense Department and other elements of the Executive Branch against halting the embryonic US ASAT program before it has demonstrated intercept capability. As yet, to "freeze" the Soviet and US

obviously is tantamount to granting Moscow a fundamental advantage in perpetuity. Such a condition would enable the Soviets to break out from the agreement since they have all required technologies, if not operational hardware, while the US would need years to reach that point.

Arrayed against the reservations of the Defense community is a loose liaison of Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA) and top-level State Department officials, tacitly supported by the National Security Council's Victor Utgoff. The latter group seeks to dilute President Jimmy Carter's guidelines concerning the US position on a space weapons treaty—such as the instruction not to perpetuate existing asymmetries and not to agree to terms that can't be verified—by urging that Soviet promises and good will be taken at face value.

The State Department/ACDA group has proposed further that the US commit itself to a policy of comprehensive "noninterference" with Soviet military satellites. The term "noninterference" in the context of an anti-ASAT treaty tends to take on extremely broad meaning. At stake are prohibitions against jamming hostile satellites, inspecting them by visiting Space Shuttle crews, hindering their operation by placing foreign objects in the paths of their transmissions and their fields of view, incapacitating them in various ways—such as overheating or overloading their sensors with ground-based high-energy lasers—and either "pirating" them through electronic means or causing them to "self-destruct" through spurious command signals.

The Defense community—whose views at this writing seem to have greater leverage in the White House than do ACDA's views—believes that a space-weapons treaty should be treated as a two-step process. During the initial phase—possibly a

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for the second, permanent phase of such an accord.

The "Sullivan" Affair

The New York Times's November 13, 1978, revelation that Sen. Henry M. Jackson (D-Wash.), chairman of the Senate's Arms Control Subcommittee, was furnished a bootlegged copy of a secret, highly informative CIA report on Soviet SALT tactics and duplicity leads to a story behind a story.

Attributed to "Administration and intelligence sources," the report contains misstatements and omissions, the latter including information disclosed in our December "In Focus..." (p. 25) under a November 3, 1978, dateline. A good case can be made for the proposition—widely circulated on Capitol Hill—that Administration sources leaked the story to Seymour Hersh of the New York Times in order to embarrass Senator Jackson, one of the Congress' pivotal and most uncompromising and knowledgeable SALT experts, and his influential staff advisor on SALT matters, Richard Perle.

Well-connected congressional sources also view the leak as part of the opening round of a brass-knuckle campaign—patterned after but far more energetic and refined than the selling of the Panama Canal Treaties last year—to ram SALT II ratification through the Senate. Key protagonist in the New York Times story is former CIA strategic analyst David S. Sullivan, a former Marine Corps captain who served in Vietnam and is the son of retired Air Force Maj. Gen. Henry R. Sullivan, Jr.

Sullivan improperly but not illegally furnished to Senator Jackson's staff a copy of a highly classified CIA report—authored principally by him—that demonstrates the near-absolute control over Soviet SALT policies exerted by that nation, as well as Moscow's elaborate deceptions of US SALT negotiators. The Sullivan

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